THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Prior to 1985 Taj Mahal was opened during the night upto 10 p.m. and during moon lit days it was extended upto midnight (12.00). Due to threat perception and after a thorough study by the security agencies and on the basis of recommendations of the district administration, Taj Mahal was allowed to open upto 7 p.m. only.

(c) to (e) The Government of Uttar Pradesh approached the Hon'ble Supreme court to accord permission to open Taj Mahal during night. The Hon'ble Supreme court in its interim order dated 12/12/1999 directed that the Taj Mahal shall not be opened to visitors for night viewing and *status quo* shall be maintained. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has asked the State Government to improve the security measures around Taj Mahal. The U.P. Government, as part of their proposals to celebrate 350 years of Taj this year have now again proposed to keep Taj Mahal open for visitors for five nights a month. C.I.S.F has submitted a proposal to upgrade security measures inside the Taj Mahal.

Decaying of Surya Temple of Katarmal in Uttaranchal

†1968. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that Surya Temple of Katarmal at Almora in Uttaranchal is constantly decaying; and

(b) if so, the details of the action plan for preservation of the temple and arresting decay?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Surya temple of Katarmal at Almora has developed a crack on one side. An estimate amounting to Rs. 57.17 lakhs has been approved to undertake the comprehensive conservation measures for its preservation and arresting further decay.

Permission for Sound and Light Shows

1969. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.